

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Meeting of the Commission
March 23, 2011
10:00 a.m.

James R. Thompson Center
Murdock Room - IDHS
Suite 5-300
100 West Randolph Street
Chicago, IL 60601

and

Lincoln Land Training Center
(Capital City Center)
130 W. Mason, Room 104
Springfield, Illinois 62702

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Commissioners

In Chicago

Martin R. Castro, Chairman
Sakhawat Hussain, M.D.
Charles E. Box
David Chang
Robert Enriquez
Marylee V. Freeman
Spencer Leak, Sr.
Munir Muhammad
Rozanne Ronen
Gregory Simoncini
Diane M. Viverito

In Springfield

Marti Baricevic

Absent

Nabi Fakroddin

Staff

Reva Bauch
Dr. Ewa I. Ewa
Michael J. Evans
Harriet Parker
Donyelle L. Gray
Evelio Mora
Christine Welninski
LaNade Bridges
Carol Comrie (Spring Coles Fellow)

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Members of Public: Steven J. Plotkin, Esq.
Laura Elkayam, Esq.

NOTICE:

Public meetings and closed meetings of the Illinois Human Rights Commission are audio recorded.

I. Call to Order

On March 23, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., Chairman Martin R. Castro called to order a meeting of the Illinois Human Rights Commission.

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS § 120/1 et seq., it was determined that:

- 1) A quorum of the public body was present at the meeting without the presence of Commissioner Nabi, Commissioner Leak, and Commissioner Muhammad.
- 2) Prior to the meeting, Commissioner Nabi gave notice (and good cause as defined by the Illinois Open Meetings Act) to the General Counsel and Secretary of the Public Body, Harriet Parker, that he would be unable to be present at today's meeting.
- 3) Commissioners Leak and Muhammad arrived shortly after the roll call.

II. Consideration of Minutes

February 23, 2011

The Commissioners voted to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2011, meeting as submitted by staff. Motion to approve the minutes made by Commissioner Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Hussain. Motion carried 12-0.

III. Staff Reports

A. N. Keith Chambers, Executive Director

Mr. Chambers reported that the Illinois Senate and House Appropriations hearings held on March 1, 2011, and March 17, 2011, respectively, in Springfield went well for the Commission. In addition to Mr. Chambers, Chairman Castro and Dr. Ewa also attended both hearings.

Mr. Chambers stated that the English, Spanish, and Polish-language versions of the 2010 Annual Report have been posted on the Commission's website.

Mr. Chambers shared that 14 new pieces of legislation have been introduced by the Illinois General Assembly, which includes proposed amendments to the Illinois Human Rights Act. Mr. Chambers stated he had earlier sent to the Commissioners, via email a copy of the list of proposed new legislation along with his comments.

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Finally, Mr. Chambers updated the Commissioners on the status of the Diversity Dinner. Mr. Chambers has met with the Illinois State Police regarding the provision of security for the dinner, as well as with CMS regarding other logistical matters.

B. Dr. Ewa I. Ewa, Chief Fiscal Officer

Chief Fiscal Officer Ewa reported there is a shortfall in the FY11 budget of approximately \$ 65,000.00. In order to avoid running out of funds by June 30, 2011, the Commission must minimize expenditures. In order to address this shortfall, Dr. Ewa has submitted a supplemental FY 2011 budget, to increase our appropriations, to the General Assembly. Dr. Ewa hopes that by the end of May, the supplemental budget will be approved, with the disbursement of funds to follow shortly thereafter. Dr. Ewa has spoken to the Budget Office of the Governor and CMS regarding the need for the additional funds. A shortfall was created when the ALJs were made a part of the Union which required an increase in salaries for the ALJs. The subject ALJ raises had not been included in the FY 2011 budget. The addition of the HRC staff's pensions to the FY 2011 budget, (after the budget had been submitted and approved), also contributed to the current budget shortfall.

C. Michael J. Evans, Chief Administrative Law Judge

Chief ALJ Evans reported that the number of complaints filed by the Illinois Department of Human Rights decreased for the month of February.

D. Harriet J. Parker, General Counsel

Ms. Parker reminded the Commissioners of the deadlines for filing their Statements of Economic Interest and for completing their Ethics Training for FY 2011.

Ms. Parker reported that the Office of the General Counsel had interviewed eight Summer 2011 Coles Fellowship candidates. Ms. Parker briefly described the interview process and informed the Commissioners that the names of the selected applicants will be announced in April 2011. Ms. Parker commended Deputy General Counsel Donyelle Gray and Assistant General Counsel Evelio Mora for their excellent efforts in recruiting and interviewing the Coles Fellowship candidates.

Ms. Parker reported that Administrative Law Judge William Borah and Assistant General Counsel Evelio Mora had attended Chicago-Kent Lambdas' 2011 LGBT Civil Rights Conference on behalf of the Commission. Mr. Borah and Mr. Mora were panelists at the Conference and provided the attendees with an overview of the Commission.

Ms. Parker shared that she had attended the one-woman play, "She's Got a Ticket To Ride", The Story of Rosa Parks, sponsored by the Department in conjunction with the DuSable Museum, in celebration of Black History Month. Chairman Castro also attended the performance. Chairman Castro suggested Mr. Chambers keep a record of all events and community meetings attended by the staff and Commissioners as representatives of the Commission. This report may be used in our Annual Report and in further support of the Commission's many meaningful community outreach endeavors.

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IV. Petition For Rehearing Before Full Commission Pursuant to 56 Ill. Adm. Code 5300.1150

Annie Johnson v. State of Illinois Department of Human Services
Charge No.: 1995CF1530 ALS No.: 9111R

The Commissioners voted to deny the Respondent's Petition for Rehearing. Motion made by Commissioner Box with a second by Commissioner Muhammad. Motion carried 11-1.

V. Unfinished Business

Diversity Dinner

The Diversity Dinner was discussed during Mr. Chambers' report.

VI. New Business

Recommended language to amend the Commission's Administrative Rules to allow the public to speak at Open Commission Meetings and to allow the public to tape and/or video record Open Commission meetings as authorized pursuant to 5 ILCS § 120/2.6 (g) and 5 ILCS § 120/2.05, respectively, of the Open Meetings Act.

Commissioner Chang, Chairman of the Commission's Legislative Committee, reported on the meeting of the Legislative Committee regarding the proposed Administrative Rules language designed to implement the above referenced provisions of the Open Meetings Act. Copies of the proposed Amendment had earlier been sent to the Commissioners. A short discussion ensued regarding the proposed Amendment.

The Commissioners voted to approve the language of the proposed Administrative Rules Amendment subject to the following amendment: that the provision requiring members of the public to provide 24-hours notice to the Commission of their intent to speak be stricken. Motion made by Commissioner Simoncini with a second by Commissioner Freeman. Motion carried 12-0.

VII. Executive Session

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m. Motion made by Commissioner Freeman with a second by Commissioner Hussain. Motion carried 12-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Parker
General Counsel